THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • THURSDAY • FEBRUARY 05, 2026 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 22 • LATE CITY EDITION

Dario Amodei, CEO and co-founder of AI startup Anthropic

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IT STOCKS CRASH AFTER AI TOOL THAT AUTOMATES CORE WORK UNVEILED

Sentiment turned sharply negative on Wednesday after a US start-up unveiled a new plug-in for its AI tool that could disrupt traditional IT businesses

TRADITIONAL SOFTWARE BIZ FACES DISRUPTION

US-based AI company Anthropic unveiled its new AI tool, Cowork, last month. What sent the IT stocks into a tailspin on Wednesday was a new plugin for this tool that automates tasks across legal, sales, marketing, and data analysis. This could cut the need for custom-built software and human expertise, reducing dependence on traditional IT companies | P15

INFOSYS FALLS THE MOST AMONG LARGE COS

- Shares of Infosys plunged 7.19%, that of Tata Consultancy Services 6.95%, HCL Technologies 4.22% and LTIMindtree 5.51% on the BSE
- In the US market, the Nasdaq Composite index tanked 1.43% on Tuesday and was down 1.25% in early trading on Wednesday. Shares of major firms like Nvidia Corp and Alphabet Inc registered declines

50%

ENTRY-LEVEL WHITE-COLLAR JOBS COULD BE DISRUPTED IN 1–5 YRS: ANTHROPIC

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

OPPN WALKS OUT

Assembly resolution condemns VB-G RAM G

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THE Karnataka Legislative Assembly on Wednesday passed a resolution urging the Centre to repeal the VB-G RAM-G scheme and reinstate MGNREGA, amid Opposition BJP and JDS MLAs staging a walkout. On Tuesday, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah had tabled the resolution against VB-G RAM-G, terming it detrimental to the federal system.

The House debated the issue for 6hours 51minutes. On Wednesday, amid opposition for the resolution and a dharna demanding the resignation of Excise Minister RB Timmapur in the alleged excise scam, RDPR and IT/BT Minister Priyank Kharge spoke elaborately on the resolution.

He alleged the VB-G RAM-G is part of the Centre's tax terrorism conspiracy against the State, as it has reduced the Centre-state funding ratio to 60:40 from 90:10 in MGNREGA.

He listed out instances of Central ministers, including Nitin Gadkari, lauding MGNREGA in the past, and the UN appreciating it as an outstanding employment guarantee programmes for rural masses.

"Just six months ago, at the International Year of Cooperative event on August 26, the Centre appreciated MGNREGA as it contributed to women's empowerment," he stated. He mentioned Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu's concern over the funding ratio, and seeking "alternative financial support" from the Centre. P4

INDIGO UNDER LENS OF COMPETITION COMMISSION

The Competition Commission ordered a detailed probe against IndiGo for unfair business practices, nearly two months after the airline cancelled thousands of flights, causing hardships to passengers | P15

Lok Sabha impasse forces cancellation of Modi's address

Cong insisted on Rahul Gandhi completing his speech, suspension of BJP MP Dubey

Opposition MPs attempt to *gherao* the Treasury benches in the Lok Sabha during the Budget session of Parliament in New Delhi on Wednesday | PTI

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi's scheduled reply to the discussion on the Motion of Thanks on the President's address could not take place on Wednesday, as the Opposition stepped up its attack on the government for blocking Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi's speech and suspension of eight MPs.

As soon as the House convened at 5 pm after three adjournments, women MPs from the Opposition marched towards the Treasury benches holding banners which read "Do what is right." Modi was not present in the House when the Opposition members made their way to the Treasury benches protesting against the suspension of MPs and former Army Chief M M Naravane's unpublished memoir. BJP MP Sandhya Rai, who was in the chair, adjourned the proceedings for the day in a few minutes.

In a post on X, Rahul Gandhi said, "PM Modi won't come to Parliament because he is scared and doesn't want to face the truth." Later, Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge called a meeting of the floor leaders in both Houses. It was decided that floor leaders of all Opposition parties will meet on Thursday morning to chalk out strategy ahead.

"How can the PM speak when the LOP was not allowed to speak? What was the PM going to reply to?" said Congress MP Jairam Ramesh.

Though Speaker Om Birla convened a meeting of the Opposition leaders at 4 pm ahead of the PM's scheduled speech, it failed to break the logjam. The Opposition put forward two demands — the suspension of BJP's Nishikant Dubey and to allow Rahul to speak in the House. The meeting was attended by Congress leaders Priyanka Gandhi and K C Venugopal among others. The leaders conveyed to the Speaker that if the government does not yield, the Opposition will disrupt the PM's speech.

Earlier, a row erupted when Dubey began his speech by referring to books such as *Edwina and Nehru* and *Mitrokhin Archive* among others and made remarks targeting former prime ministers Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi.

Modi gave the message (to the then Army Chief MM Naravane), do what you think is right (on LAC). Meaning he shed responsibility

Rahul Gandhi, LS Leader of Opposition

Fire-fighting by Speaker

Speaker Om Birla convened a meeting of the Opposition at 4 pm ahead of the PM's scheduled speech, but it failed to break the logjam

Rule 349

As Dubey kept listing books about the Gandhi family, the chair disallowed it citing Rule 349, which bars reading from any book except in connection with the business of the House

Mamata argues in SC, questions SIR

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY
@ New Delhi

THE Supreme Court on Wednesday witnessed dramatic scenes as West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee appeared in person to make submissions in a case challenging the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in West Bengal.

Banerjee, who holds a law degree and had briefly practised as a lawyer, alleged her state was being targeted and people were being bulldozed.

"We are not getting justice," she told a bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi.

Banerjee, who was represented by senior advocates Shyam Divan and Kapil Sibal, sought five minutes to personally advance submissions. The CJI granted her 15 minutes.

"They (EC) are targeting Bengal. We have given everything to ECI... all kinds of documents, but got no justice. I am a very less important person. But please protect people's rights," Banerjee told the bench with folded hands.

She alleged that the names of women who take their husbands' surnames after marriage or shift to their in-laws' houses are deleted, citing mismatches.

The bench took note of Banerjee's submission and said genuine persons must remain on electoral rolls.

Referring to the EC as a 'WhatsApp Commission' that passes instructions through the instant messaging app, Banerjee alleged that "the SIR process is only for deletion, not inclusion".

PTI

Questioning the rationale for conducting SIR in her state, she asked how can a process that usually takes two years be done in three months.

Opposing the submissions of Banerjee, senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi, appearing for the EC, said the West Bengal government was not cooperative. "We wrote to the state government so many times to give grade-two officers to be appointed as EROs (electoral registration officers). Only 80 officers were given."

During the hearing, Banerjee's counsel Divan sought a direction from the court to the ECI to upload the reasons for each voter discrepancy, so that people know why they are not on the list.

The SC bench issued notices and sought replies to the petition by February 9 from the EC and chief electoral officer of West Bengal.

RAHUL'S 'TRAITOR' JIBE AT BITTU SPARKS POLITICAL FIRESTORM

PREETHA NAIR & HARPREET BAJWA @ New Delhi / Chandigarh

A sharp war of words between Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Union minister Ravneet Singh Bittu snowballed into a political storm on Wednesday with the BJP urging Lok Sabha Speaker to take action against Rahul.

The face-off took place outside Parliament's Makar Dwar, where Rahul was standing with the suspended opposition MPs, who were protesting on the stairs.

While walking past the protesting MPs, Bittu said, "They are sitting here as if they have won a war."

Responding to the comment, Rahul said, "The thing is, here is a traitor walking right by. Take a look at the face. How he looks."

Rahul then extended his hand towards Bittu and said, "Hello brother, my traitor friend. Don't worry, you will come back to the Congress."

Bittu refused to shake hands, saying: "*Desh ke dushman* (enemies of the country)," pointing at Rahul.

Rahul Gandhi exchanges words with MoS Ravneet Singh Bittu (R) | PTI

Bittu is not just an MP or a member of a Sikh family. His grandfather — Sardar Beant Singh — fell to an assassin's bullet. And you call him a traitor. This is completely unacceptable

Hardeep Singh Puri

A former close aide of Gandhi, Bittu had switched to the BJP ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

Later in a video statement, Bittu asked why Rahul didn't say such a thing to other MPs, but only to a Sikh?

"I am the grandson of a martyr (ex-Punjab CM Beant Singh, who was assassinated by militants in 1995) and as long as I was in the Congress, it was fine. But, now that I am with the BJP, he is giving me such names," he said.

Stepping up the attack, the BJP fielded its Sikh leaders, including Union minister Hardeep Singh Puri and Delhi minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa, to accuse the Congress of harbouring the same "anti-Sikh mentality" that was on display at the height of the anti-Sikh riots of 1984.

Defending Rahul, Congress MP Sukhpla Singh Khaira said the word "my traitor friend" used by Rahul was to address Bittu as an individual who ditched the party in testing times. "It is by no means an insult to the Sikh community."

The 'traitor jibe' evoked sharp reactions in Punjab, which will go to polls next year. Ashwani Sharma, working president of the BJP in Punjab, said Rahul is trying to cover up his failures by using abusive language.

Punjab Congress chief Amarinder Singh Raja Warring said Bittu was a traitor as he betrayed the Congress. P12

Man forges Guv signature, issues official letters

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

A conman, posing as an officer from the Prime Minister's Office and the adopted son of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, has been issuing appointment letters by forging the signature of the Karnataka Governor.

In a complaint, G Pradeep, Under Secretary to Governor (Admin and Accounts), stated that the accused, Sujayendra HN, forged the Governor's signature and issued an official letter to the vice-chancellor of a university on June 18, 2025, purporting it to be from the Governor's Office.

A case was registered by the Vidhana Soudha police on January 5, 2026, and was transferred to the Vijayanagar police station on January 21 since the accused resides there. A case of forgery has been registered against the accused.

Sujayendra alias Sujay, a resident of RPC Layout, was arrested in November last year for collecting Rs 2.7 crore from a doctor in J&K to establish an Ayurvedic hospital in Devanahalli. There are also cheque bounce cases against him.

NEW BEGINNING

Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla felicitates new Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh after his swearing-in ceremony, in Imphal, on Wednesday; (inset) deputy chief ministers L Dikho (top) and Nemcha Kipgen | PTI | P12

Drug cases in K'taka jump 63% in just a year

KARTHIK K K @ Mysuru

KARNATAKA has recorded a sharp rise in cases registered under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, with official data available with *TNIE* showing a steep 63% increase in just one year.

According to data from the Karnataka State Police, while 4,187 NDPS cases were registered across the state in 2024, the number surged to 6,825 in 2025, underscoring the growing scale of the drug menace in the state.

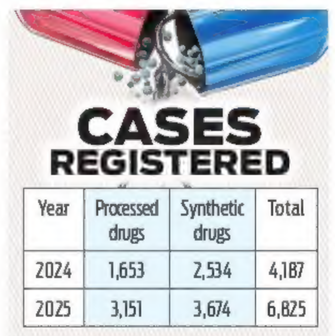
The increase in the number of cases has raised serious concerns among law enforcement agencies, policymakers and public health experts, who warned that the trend reflected both expanding drug networks and rising substance abuse, particularly among youngsters.

Officials said the high number of cases pointed to a combination of intensified police action and the wider availability of narcotic and psychotropic substances.

Senior police officers attributed part of the rise to focused enforcement drives launched across the state.

Special teams have been formed to crack down on peddlers, especially in the Mysuru and Bengaluru city police commissionerate, after seizures of drugs worth crores of rupees in recent months. In Mysuru, a police team from Mumbai raided a drug manufacturing unit on the city outskirts, while last month, an NCB team confirmed functioning of a clandestine drug manufacturing lab in the city.

Following these cases, police have heightened surveillance near educational institutions, IT corridors, transport hubs and urban hotspots, including industrials sheds. P7



CASES REGISTERED

Year	Processed drugs	Synthetic drugs	Total
2024	1,653	2,534	4,187
2025	3,151	3,674	6,825

EXPRESS READ

12 get 5-year RI for stripping ST woman

Belagavi: A Belagavi court on Wednesday sentenced 12 persons, including six women, to five years rigorous imprisonment for the brutal assault, public stripping and attempted murder of a 42-year-old Scheduled Tribe woman at Hosavantamuri village in December 11, 2023 | P6

Post-harvest model to boost farmers' income

Bengaluru: The state government is introducing a first-of-its-kind post-harvest and value-addition model aimed at improving farmer incomes. Agriculture Minister N Chaluvarayaswamy said this will enable farmers to earn four to five times higher income and reduce dependence on middlemen | P6

Top JeM commander among 3 killed in J-K

Jammu: Three Pakistani terrorists, including a top commander of Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), were killed inside a cave in Udhampur district of Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday. Several powerful blasts rocked the area when the forces stormed the cave during a 20-hour-long operation | P12

U.P. SHOCKER

Lens on Korean online games as 3 minor sisters die by suicide

NITIN RAWAT & NAMITA BAJPAI
@ Ghaziabad/Lucknow

IN a shocking incident, three sisters, aged 12, 14 and 16, allegedly addicted to a Korean task-based online game, died by suicide in Ghaziabad in the wee hours of Wednesday.

All three jumped from a balcony of their ninth-floor apartment around 2 am.

The trio lived with their father Chetan Kumar, a forex trader. While the eldest was born to Kumar's first wife, the younger two were born to his second wife, who also lived with the family. At the time of the incident, Kumar and his wife were sleeping with their son. The girls were resting in another room. According to the family, they heard a noise and rushed to the girls' room.

"We saw the room was locked. We broke open the door and found the girls were not there. We ran downstairs and saw them lying on the ground," a family member said.

"Papa, sorry. We cannot leave Korea. Korea is our life, Korea is our soul, and you cannot separate us from it," their suicide note read. Police said the three were addicted to an online Korean game called 'Love Game' and had not been attending school for the past 2-3 years.

"Because of this, when their family members restricted their mobile usage, they took the extreme step," a senior police officer said.

(Assistance for those having suicidal thoughts is available on Tele Manas-14416 and Tata Institute of Social Sciences' helpline-02225521111)